

Strategic Planning Transcript

Introduction:

Slide 1:

Our presentation today will be Strategic Planning for state government. Our presenter is Bev Augustine, Acting Deputy Director, Program and Consumer Services Division at the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Slide 2

Before we begin, I would like to give you some tips on how you can be more interactive. If you'll look at the top right-hand corner of your screen, there are four buttons I want to call your attention to. First, if you will look at the feedback button you will find that you can give us feedback. And if you will click on the drop-down menu, you will see that there are different colors. So, if you need help, click on red. If you can't hear, click on blue. And so forth. A second button looks like three little white sheets of paper. Here you will find handouts. We encourage you to print the slides, as well as other great information that Bev has provided. You will also see a mute button, and we please ask that everyone mutes their microphone during the entire presentation. And then a very important button for you to consider is the Q & A. If you have any questions, will you please type them in and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

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Now, let me just say a few words about Bev Augustine. Bev has diverse executive and leadership experience with the State of California. She has worked for the state for 28 years and has administered and supported a range of mission critical functions, including performance management, performance measurement, strategic planning, call center management, employee selection recruitment and retention, organizational development, public affairs and consumer complaint resolution. Bev is also an active member of the Performance Management Council an ad hoc group of government executives who collaborate and share knowledge and resources to help improve the performance of state government. So, will you join me in welcoming Bev.

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Well, thank you Joan and thank you also to Jody Traversaro for inviting me here today. Good morning everyone. We have a lot of ground to cover this morning, so we're going to jump right in. Joan, I'm pressing the down key, but it's not moving. Here we go.

Slide 5

Okay, very good. Okay, so what we're going to cover today is the definition of Strategic Planning, why it's important, what are tactical plans versus strategic plans, what the framework of a plan is. In other words, what the components of a plan are... and again, this slide doesn't seem to be moving.

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Slide 6

We're going to talk about how to develop a plan, implement a plan, performance measures and then finally, facilitations steps. So, hopefully these topics will cover everything that you want to know about.

Slide 7

So, what is a strategic plan? Here's the definition: it is an agency's comprehensive plan to address its business needs. In other words, to successfully carry out its mission. Strategic Planning is a long-term, future-oriented process of assessment, goal setting and strategy-building. It relies on careful consideration of an organization's capabilities and environment, and it leads, hopefully, to priority-based, resource allocation and other decisions. It shapes and guides what an agency is, what it does, and why it does it. And just a brief pause here... having a little technical difficulty.

Slide 8

So, in the Strategic Planning process it's really important to remember that people are as important to the plan as the process itself. We talk a lot about process in this webinar, but always keep in mind that it's the people who actually make the plan happen. That's a key point that I want you to remember today.

Slides 9 and 10

So, why is Strategic Planning important? It helps an organization to secure the resources needed to reach desired outcomes. It helps an organization prepare for contingencies, and it helps you develop a framework for orderly growth and progress.

Additionally, it provides for accountability based on results. And by results meaning, how services make a difference to your customers and clients. And hopefully, if it's done right, the plan will link its results to funding in a way that identifies what taxpayers get for their tax dollars.

Poll

Let's take a quick poll here. I'd like to hear how many of you have up-to-date strategic plans. Just curious about that. So, the majority of you do. That's great! That's terrific. I'm really glad to hear that.

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Okay, so moving ahead, let's talk about tactical plans versus strategic plans. There's a big difference between the two, although I hear people use the terms interchangeably quite a bit. Tactical plans are short-term plans. This kind of plan can also be referred to an action plan, and we're going to be talking about those a little bit later in the presentation. Strategic plans are long-term plans. They are typically three to five years long and they align processes, systems, services and deliverables for the long-term.

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Okay, so in developing the plan you will need to select a Strategic Planning team. The team serves at the oversight and coordinating body of the planning process. When you select members of your team you should give thought to the following. Do the team members represent diverse areas and interests? Do they possess a variety of strengths, knowledge and skills? Do they know a lot about your organization? Are they influential and persuasive with your constituents? Do the team members know who your organization's primary customers and clients are? Do they have an interest in the long-term direction of the agency? Do they have the time and energy to commit to the Strategic Planning process? Typically, the plans don't take place in a single session and they can be quite arduous. At Consumer Affairs, it took us about three sessions to get ours together. So, just be aware that you have to make sure that the team members truly have the time and the willingness and the commitment before you pick them.

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Now, let's talk about the role of the team. Here are some things that the Strategic Planning team is typically responsible for: the scope of the plan-- how many areas of the organization will the plan address? What length of time will the plan cover? Typically, a strategic plan will cover three to five years. Who will review and approve the draft and final versions of the plan? Is it going to be your director, your board members, or other stakeholders perhaps as well? Who is the team leader? This is the person who will manage the overall planning efforts, so it's very important to pick the right person for this. And finally, the team should also work on action plans for completing the objectives listed in the plan.

Slide 14

Now, let's talk about how to identify Governor's office priorities and legislative mandates. All state organizations operate within an administration in which the Governor's office has priorities. When we do Strategic Planning, it's essential to understand these priorities and the organization's role in supporting the governor's agenda. And typically, it's your agency secretary who will communicate those priorities to your department's director. So, those should be known before you embark on your Strategic Planning. To fully consider statutory mandates you should identify your organization's enabling laws and all the other laws that pertain to you. Identify mandates--what programs are you required to administer. And this is really critical. This is a critical point because these are the basis for your core business functions, which we'll talk about later. You should consider the degree of flexibility in meeting those mandates. Do you share the responsibility of those mandates with other organizations? If so, they may want to be involved in your Strategic Planning process. You should determine the current status of how you're meeting the mandate. And based on the governor's office priorities, do legislative changes need to be proposed?

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So, let's go to the next slide to talk about organizational issues. Here were some tips on how to decide if an organizational issue is strategic and should be included in your plan. I've also provided you with a handout on that. Some of the criteria from that handout are listed above. And these are kind of the key questions to ask yourself to determine if an issue is strategic. If you answer "yes" to any or most of these questions, it probably is. Will the issue create a change to your mission? Will it create new programs or service goals? Will it cause significant staffing or technology changes? Will it cause a major facility change or change in stakeholder relationships? So, those are mainly the key ways you figure out if an issue is strategic.

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Okay, so let's move onto what are the components of a Strategic Plan. We're going to talk about each of these components individually, but before we embark on that discussion I do want to talk about the SWOT analysis.

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One item is actually not a component of the plan, but it's very critical to the development of the plan. It is your SWOT analysis, and that of course is, an analysis of your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis identifies those things both internally and externally. It's an analysis and evaluation of key internal and external data and factors that influence the success of your agency in achieving your mission and goals. It should be the first step in any plan development or it's kind of actually, not a step, but a pre-exercise to the plan that is very critical.

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And here is a nice overview, a succinct overview of a SWOT. It is, so it's an assessment of an agency's position, its performance, its problems and its potential. Generally, we think of opportunities and threats as external, but in reality they can be internal as well, and I'll talk a little bit about that.

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So, when determining your agency's strength and weaknesses during your SWOT analysis please consider the following: Are you customers and clients currently satisfied? What is the organization accomplishing? What is not being accomplished? What's the quality of your products or services? What are your existing programs? Are you currently measuring performance and perhaps most importantly to your strength and weaknesses, what is your organization's capacity for change? It's within your capacity for change that opportunities lay. For example, you may have staff who are very talented and motivated, but who are underutilized. During your strategic planning process, you may discover an opportunity for them to grow through the introduction of a new program or new tasks. Conversely, a threat may be that if these employees continue to be

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underutilized then they become disinterested and disenfranchised and ultimately leave your organization

So, that's an example of an internal, both an opportunity and a threat. Some other things you should look at in your internal SWOT is your agency's workforce, experience, their training level... do you have a lot of folks getting ready to retire? You have to make sure your succession planning is in place. What is their morale? How is your information technology support level, your data systems and your capital assets? Those are all things to take a look at in your internal SWOT.

Slide 19

Now, when we work on the external SWOT, we focus mostly on economic, political, social and technological changes. And some examples of external factors that might be considered by a state agency include things such as budget constraints, economic downturns or conversely, economic booms. Seasonal changes, such as holidays, weather extremes, major changes in statewide technology systems, legislative changes, changes coming down from the federal government.

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So, you have to take a look at how will these external factors, which of them, how will they affect your organization? Which of them are opportunities? Which of them might hinder your success? So, the external spot is very important. Now, one thing you may want to consider when conducting your external SWOT is talking to your customers and stakeholders. And if you've never done this, it's probably a really good idea to do it, to at least get a baseline, because they can give you a lot of valuable input as to how your organization is doing.

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What do we mean by customers and stakeholders? A customer or a client is anyone who receives or uses the products or services of the agency. But remember, your customers can be internal as well. For example, your organization's staff are clients of your Admin Division. Your technology division provides service to both internal clients – the staff – and external clients. So, in doing your strategic plan you want to consider your internal clients as well, and those are usually your employees. A Stakeholder is any person or group with a vested interest in your organization and they will have expectations about your performance. Some examples of these could be industry members, the legislature, and the media. Many times, an organization will survey their clients, either with a written or phone survey, to determine their level of satisfaction with the organization. And again, if you've never done this, it's a really good idea to get a handle on what people think of your performance and their satisfaction level with your services. Okay, it's time for some questions if anybody has any questions.

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Questions:

Well, Bev I don't see any that are in the box, so let's just wait a moment and see if we have any come up. But one of the things, someone sent me a note that there are several people are having audio problems. So if you are, would you please go to the feedback box and click on blue, "can't hear". And that will give us an assessment if there is a problem with audio or its just one person's computer.

One of the questions we do have is will you get a copy of the PowerPoint? Certainly, you can download it now with the handout button, or we will also be posting all of this to the Virtual Training Center--both the slides and any handouts. Okay, I think that's it Bev. I don't think there's any other questions.

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Okay, well let's go onto the next slide then. So, now let's talk about the framework of a plan and the different components. The mission statement: In a nutshell, a mission statement is a brief formal statement of the agency's purpose. It describes your agency's unique reason for existence. And although it is brief, a mission statement should:

- Identify your overall purpose.
- Identify the basic needs or distinct problems that you are designed to address.
- It might make mention of your customers, your clients or your users.
- And it helps identify customer/client and stakeholder expectations. So, when you're developing your mission statement, consider the following questions:

Who are we?

What do we do?

Why do we do it?

For whom do we do it?

Why are public resources devoted to this effort? That is a key point that your strategic plan should determine for you.

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Now, let's take a look at this example of a mission statement. This is from my department, the Department of Consumer Affairs. It is to protect and serve the interest of California consumers. In regards to developing your mission statement, I want to point out that it's important for an organization to know what your main business functions are. Business functions are broad descriptions of your mandate. And I'll go into this in more detail, but I wanted to point them out at this point in the session because they really help you shape your mission statement. Typically, an organization has only two to four business functions. And at Consumer Affairs, our functions are licensing, enforcement, and consumer education. And so you can see how our statement, which is to

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“protect and serve” the interests of California consumers, reflects those core business functions.

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The vision statement--the key thing to remember about a vision statement is that it is non-attainable. And I've seen a lot of confusion about this in different plans that I have facilitated. The vision statement should describe a perfect-world scenario that you probably will never reach. This scenario would exist if there was no need for your agency. So, the vision statement keeps your agency constantly striving toward something, and I will show you an example of that.

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The Department of Healthcare Services vision is quality healthcare will be accessible and affordable to all Californians. As we know, that isn't likely to come about anytime soon, but it is a vision that DHCS will continually work toward.

Another example is Consumer Affairs' vision statement. Our vision for California is: California consumers make informed choices and have access to competent and ethical service providers. Again, that is not likely to happen any time in the future, but we're constantly working towards that.

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Now for values, they describe how the agency conducts itself in carrying out its mission. They provide guidance for staff, customers and clients regarding the principles that underlie your organization's beliefs and conduct. So, they will reflect your attitudes about the way people and employees are treated and your customers,

Processes – the way that the organization is managed, decisions are made, and products and services are provided.

Performance – the expectation concerning the agency's responsibilities and the quality of its products and services.

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And here are some examples for you, again from Consumer Affairs'. We have this set of values.

Poll:

And a quick poll here, how many of you have departments that list values in your strategic plan? It looks like the majority of you do. It's coming out to 66% yes, 5% no and a quarter of you, 25%, are not sure. So, that's good. That's very good actually.

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So, moving on to goals. Well-written Goals:

--Are in harmony with the agency Mission.

--Focus on outcomes and are qualitative in nature

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- They will help the agency fulfill its Mission.
- They are consistent with the agency's enabling legislation.
- Are they derived from the internal/external assessment that we talked about and reflect critical issues.

But most importantly, as I mentioned before, goals must support the organization's major business functions. It is absolutely essential for an organization to identify its core business functions before it sets out to create a strategic plan. Most organizations have only a handful of those.

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And here is an example, again, from Consumer Affairs. One of our main business functions is licensing and therefore one of our strategic planning goals is California is the recognized national leader in professional licensing.

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Here is an example, Consumer Education is, of course, a core function and one of our goals is that our effective communication and outreach efforts provide customers and licensees with relevant, timely, up-to-date info. Notice how this goal, both of these goals are broad and non-measurable, yet they support the business function. That is what goals are very broad statements.

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The objectives, which we're going to talk next about are not broad. The objectives are the steps for achieving your goal. They are specific, measurable and time-dependent tasks for the accomplishment of a goal. Achievement of objectives should result in the eventual achievement of your goals. The objectives form the central feature of Action Plans because they will drive the action steps that you will take.

*Objectives should be **S.M.A.R.T.***

Specific – give specificity to the goal and define specifically

Measurable – you are able to measure them qualitatively or quantitatively

Achievable – are challenging, yet attainable; realistic

Results-oriented – focus on outcomes not functions or services

Time-certain – specify a timeframe for completion

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Here is an example of a goal and objective, and again I'm going to use a Consumer Affairs' strategic plan: One of our goals is, California is the recognized national leader in professional licensing and the supporting objective here is to evaluate the licensing process for efficiency. And you notice that we have a date certain there.

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Now, let's talk a little bit about action plans, which I mentioned earlier. The tactical or action plans--they are very important to strategic planning because they outline the steps and timeline for completing objectives. They are critical to the implementation of your plan. You have to create them and stick to your action plan. That will ensure that your strategic plan does not just sit on the shelf or your web site. They must include the major activities for achieving an objective, who is responsible for the activity and the date the activity will be completed. Your strategic planning committee should decide who is responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented in your organization. This person needs to know exactly what their responsibilities and timeframes are for completion.

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OK, now why do we measure performance? Quite simply, what gets measured, gets improved. Many people leave out this very critical component of strategic planning. You might ask well, why should we do this? We measure performance because again, what gets measured gets improved. Measures, especially those that are publicly disseminated, as ours are at Consumer Affairs, are posted on our web site. They will keep the organization moving forward with a real sense of urgency with action plans that deliver measurable results. You should come up with a set of performance measures:

- Measuring performance encourages government responsiveness.
- Provides management and others with information on the degree of Mission accomplishment.
- Measures reinforced desired behaviors in the organization.

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Here's another key point, why do we do this: To hold ourselves accountable to the public and other stakeholders. It let's folks know, and they should be very clear on how well you are doing with your mission and your goals and objectives.

Poll:

So, let's take a quick poll here. Does your departmental strategic plan include performance measures? I'm very curious about that. So, it is looking like just about half of you do and 30% of you are not sure whether you do or not. I think it would be interesting for you to go check on that with your organizations. And 20% of you say no. Okay, thank you for that.

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So, what is a performance measure? It is a qualitative or quantitative description of performance. I have a few examples here. One would be cycle time, the average number of days to complete a complaint intake if you are in the business of receiving complaints from folks, which many of us are. And these examples are for our complaint intake and investigation processes from Consumer Affairs. And I will talk more about the different types of measures of categories in a minute. One thing I'm going to point out is often people confuse targets with

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performance measures. Remember--the performance measure is a description of what is performed, in qualitative or quantitative terms. And you will see the examples I have here match that description. A target, on the other hand, describes the desired level of performance. So, for example, a cycle time measure I have here, a target might be 3 days to complete the complaint intake process, but the actual measure is the average number of days to complete the process. And we will talk more about that in a little bit.

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What exactly do we measure? There is often a lot of confusion around this. You can measure many, many things with performance measures, but that would be unwise. What government organizations should measure are those business processes that support the organization's core business functions, which we talked about earlier.

What do we mean by a business process? Here is the definition: It is an ongoing, recurring and systematic series of actions that transforms an input into an output. And I have given you some examples here. Business processes, of course, support your or they should support your core business functions. You should measure the major processes that support your business functions, because you want a succinct set of measures. You want no more than a dozen measures for your whole organization. So, let me show you in the next slide how all of this ties together.

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Take a look at the order of components that I have here on this slide. At the top, is your business function and that would be a core business function that I talked about earlier. At Consumer Affairs, of course, one of ours is enforcement. Here is a goal that supports that business function. California is the recognized leader in enforcement and objectives supporting that goal is to set and maintain model professional standards and enforcement. One of the business processes in that function is complain investigation. And the performance measure for that business process is the average number of days it takes us to complete informal investigations. So, that is how all these different components tie together. They are all, they must all be related to each other. And again, most importantly, all of this has got to tie back to your core business functions.

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Here are a couple of more definitions commonly used in performance measurement. We talk about inputs, which are resources used in delivering the service or good, and there are some examples there for you. We talk about outputs. Outputs are what is produced by the business process. So, it's important to have an idea of what those are.

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Next we have the major categories of measures. These are the different types of measures.

Volume: simply a count of how much/how many are produced; how many services, how many widgets

Cycle Time: how many hours, days, weeks, months it takes to complete a business process or a step in a business process

Efficiency: is a measure of cost, and sometimes those are called cost measures

Customer Service: a measure of our stakeholders' or clients' satisfaction

Quality: a measure of how well something is done or performed

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Now, when you develop your performance measures, it is important to create a balanced set of measures. For example, in order to measure the cycle time of a business process, you must know the volume for that process. So, in other words, how many licenses do you issue? How many complaints do you resolve? How many publications do you produce? You have to know how many before you can really assess your cycle time. Likewise, if I want to know if my clients are satisfied with my business processes, I will want to measure customer satisfaction. When we hear from customers about how we conduct business that may help us figure out how to improve things like cycle time and cost.

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Here is some more terminology you should be familiar with when developing measures.

A baseline: You can determine baselines by going through your program's records. Baselines are simply the initial level of performance upon which future performance is measured. For example, how long does it take you to respond to calls in a call center? How long does it take you to issue a license? Collect as much historical data as you can. If you don't have historical data, maybe because the process is new, you should measure the process for at least a year to set the baseline.

Benchmark: You hear that term quite a bit as well in a performance measurement. When we benchmark, we measure our performance against another organization's performance. You can determine benchmarks for your program if you wish by researching performance reports from other organizations – if they have them! Benchmarks are a nice-to-have, not a must-have in most cases, especially for a new performance program. Sometimes, depending on what you are measuring, it is interesting to know how your counterpart organizations are doing. And you might also want to look at not just what state departments are doing, but how our local, county and federal agencies are performing and benchmarking.

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Now let's move on to Targets. Targets are important, and as I mentioned earlier, it's really important to understand the difference between a target and the performance measure itself. And I've given you a handout on how to set targets, and I will show you an example of a target now. It is simply a level of performance that is expressed as a tangible and you compare your actual achievement against that target.

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So, let's look at an example. Here's the performance measure. Average number of days to complete complaint intake. Let's say you have determined that your baseline or how you have been currently performing for a period of time is 5 days, you might set 5 days for completing the intake process. You might want to set your target past 2 days. And thankfully, setting targets does not involve complex math or anything like that. It is actually pretty simple. It is there in your handout. We do not have time to go into that detail here, but very important component of measures. Again, the targets keep your agency moving forward.

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And here are some final tips on performance measurements. Before you set out to develop your measures, it is often helpful to flowchart or diagram the business processes that you want to measure first, because there might be some opportunity for process improvement. And you want to know where your bottle necks are and your duplication before you put your measures up. So, if you haven't already done this, you really should flowchart a diagram, your processes first. You should measure what is important strategically. It's sometimes very tempting to create a set of 50 measures, but that is not going to give the public and your stakeholders a good idea of what is important to you strategically and what your core functions are. You should measure only what you are responsible for. You may have some processes that involve other organizations. When you put up performance measures, it is really important to gather with those other organizations to discuss exactly how you are going to measure and how much they are responsible for and how much you are responsible for. You should measure what you can control; either directly or indirectly, only what you can control. And finally, it is good to ask your customers and clients what you should measure.

Slide 47: Questions

Okay, any questions at this point about performance measures?

Joan: Well, actually Bev we have a question. It goes back a little bit.

Bev: Okay, that's fine.

Joan: What is the biggest obstacle in starting a strategic planning effort?

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Bev: Wow, that's a very good question. I would say the biggest obstacle is organization inertia. That is just a general unwillingness to embark on the process, because in the process you can expose a lot about the organization's weakness and threats. I would say, you have to overcome potential inertia. And you have to, again, I mentioned picking the team-- team members have to be committed time wise and they have to have a deep concern and belief in your organization. Any other questions before we move on? I know this a lot of material and as Joan mentioned, you will get the handout on this because we're covering a lot of ground on this fairly rapidly. No more questions?

Joan: We do. We do have some questions.

Bev: Oh we do, oh fabulous. Okay.

Joan: Is it okay to combine your performance measure with the target?

Bev: Yes, well let me back up here. You display the performance measure as it is. And again, it's the qualitative or quantitative statements about your cycle time or your volume. And then right underneath it you would say and our target for meeting that measure is, you know, 'x' amount of days or 'x' amount of hours. So, yes, in that sense they are combined, but you can't lose sight of the fact that the measure is distinct from the target.

Joan: And we have another question. Could you go over again how to establish targets?

Bev: Well, it's in your handouts, let me pull this up here really quickly. If you take a look at your handouts, typically you will establish a 3-point range of targets for your performance measures. They use the word here metrics, but metrics is the same thing as performance measures. So, for example, this is a good example, when you're talking to your staff about setting a target for your error rate. In other words, how many errors are acceptable in a business process? Your employees might feel more comfortable with a 12% error rate if this is the first time you've gone out and set targets with them. And you might want to set something like that to help them you know, gain a little confidence. That would be your minimum target. And then your moderate target might be 9%. Your stretch or your ultimate target that you might want to implement over time would be the 4% error rate, because that's kind of a tight margin for error there. So, a 3-point range of targets is very helpful. You know, you should, again, involve your employees, look at trends... When you set targets, looking at your baseline is really critical and looking at your flow charts for your business processes too is critical. You have to really know how your processes work.

Joan: Okay, we have another question. When starting out, is it better to select a small number of measures or spread a wider net for more general measures?

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Bev: As I mentioned, it's better to select a very small set of measures. I know that some of you might be from organizations that are very big and you have a broad jurisdiction, but you have core business functions and those measures have to tie back to that very small set of core business functions. Now, often times and we do this at Consumer Affairs, you can have your main set of measures, which you promulgate to the public and the legislature and your stakeholders. You can also have internal performance measures that you don't publicize, but you use them internally for your staff. So, the measures I've been talking about here this morning are those measures that you promulgate or should promulgate publicly. You can also have a larger set of internal measures. In fact, that's probably actually very helpful.

Joan: Okay, and here's one more. How does good performance affects budgets?

Bev: Well, that's a very good question.

Joan: I thought so too.

Bev: That's an excellent question in this time of budget constraint. And you know, I was actually around during the time of performance-based budgeting. I don't know how many of you may have been involved in that project, but our department, Consumer Affairs, was one of the pilot departments in that project. Our performance was actually tied to our budget, directly to our budget. And Department of Finance, we were given allocations and resources based on how well we met our performance targets. And I know that there is, I believe there is, some legislative push for that very things. And I would think that the Brown Administration is probably quite interested in putting that forward. So, the more you can position your agency to have quantifiable measures I think the better off you are for perhaps being, having a chance at getting the better budget. And in fact, I think, I don't know if this is still a requirement, but the Department of Finance was for awhile requiring departments to have strategic plans before budgets were approved, and I'm hoping that's still the case.

Joan: Okay Bev, I have one more question. Do operational measures play into establishing strategic measures?

Bev: Yes, they do and I think of operational measures as kind of a sub-set of strategic measures. So, yes they do.

Joan: Okay, and one more. Oh this is great. This is a great presentation. Are you able to host this training for departments that are embarking upon their annual updates?

Bev: Yes. I'm certainly willing to do that. I'd be happy to.

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Joan: Okay, I think that's it for the questions for now.

Poll

Bev: Okay. So, let's move ahead here. Let's talk a little bit about strategic plan facilitation, and I'd like to hear from you. Have you ever facilitated a strategic planning session before? Okay, so it looks like... the results are still coming in, but it looks like about ¼ of you, 26% have facilitated a session. 41% no, but 31% of you have participated in one. Okay, that's very good to know. Thank you.

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So, now you've taken this course, you've done some reading, you've looked at a few strap plans, you're ready to facilitate a session, right? Not quite, not so fast. I would say you are not ready.

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Strategic plan facilitation is much different from knowledge about a strategic plan. It does mean, just because you know about the elements of a plan doesn't mean you're ready to lead a group and facilitate one. And if you've never facilitated a group before, please get training in facilitation before you attempt to lead a group in strategic planning. Strategic planning is one of the toughest and most complex subjects to facilitate. And as I mentioned, the sessions can take as long as three days and it's very complex. And you have to understand how group dynamics work. You have to have picked your team very carefully, and scheduled the sessions in a way that respect people's time and schedules. Those are all things that a facilitator knows how to do. Trust me, this isn't an endeavor for the inexperienced. So, get some training first before you embark on that, but just in case you are asked to do it, I want to talk a little bit about some Best Practices if you are interested in learning how to facilitate. Because they're fun once you get it down.

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One of the tips I have here is get the planning committee out of their seats. Creating the plan in a one-day session can be grueling. My staff actually has it down to a science. They can usually get folks out in a day, but it's very time intensive. When you do that you should allow for adequate breaks, get the committee moving around the room, working on easels and white boards. So, they must get out of their seats, stretch and walk around.

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The second tip is: you can lead a horse to water, you can speed the process up by offering strong examples of strategic plans, or examples of parts of plans, before the session. In fact, it's good idea to put together an agenda and an information packet for committee members and give it to them before the

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meeting. They will need to understand the definitions of mission and vision, because people get hung up on those. They get hung up on the values as I mentioned. And they have to also understand the difference between goals and objectives. So, if you hand out those definitions before hand with some examples you'll really cut down on time.

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The third tip I have is: narrow your values. We have found in our facilitation sessions that people get hung up on values. Values are subjective. They're often a bottleneck in a session. So, what we do is give flashcards to the groups with 20 to 30 commonly used values, so that kind of gives them a guideline to work from.

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Now, I want to talk just quickly about some case studies. I was asked to facilitate a plan for The California Consumer Affairs Association. This is a 30-year old association of local, state and federal consumer protection agencies--a great organization. However, they've never had a strategic plan. They have long-time members with very strong opinions and new members with lots of ideas.

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The biggest challenge was they have never really understood what the purpose of their organization was. And there was a lack of consensus about why they existed. That's kind of a problem when you do strategic planning.

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I broke this into two sessions, because the first day we had to spend on the mission, vision and values because they had never done a plan before. This was brand new for them. The second session was the goals and objectives. I had to keep them to a very tight agenda with strict timelines. I had to be really mean about timeouts and breaks, and I gave them plenty of examples to work from.

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So, another example is my work with The California State Athletic Commission. That is a commission under Consumer Affairs and it regulates boxers, mixed-martial arts and sporting events, like matches.

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And some of the challenges, they had a lot of changes in executive leadership. The committee members were committed to spending one day only. And they came from all over the state, and they were new, some of the new members had never participated in strategic planning before.

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So, beforehand, again, I provide definitions and examples. Again, a very tight agenda because we just had the one day and I gave them copies of the organization's, they did have a previous plan before so that was helpful too.

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And finally, one more case study, The Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, also under Consumer Affairs'. They license and regulate engineers and land surveyors as you might guess.

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My staff facilitated this plan, and the committee was too large. The board members requested that additional managers and staff sit on the committee and it turned out to be 22 members. That's large and one of the things I forgot to mention was the committee should be rather small. We like no more than ten. So, we had ten, twelve. So, we had 22 members in the room.

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We ended up breaking the committee into focus groups. Four groups worked simultaneously and then switched to different white board stations to continue the work of the previous group. So, we rotated them through the room, through the white boards.

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So, any questions about facilitation before we wrap up here?

Joan: Well, let's see. Can you recommend, oh, this is not about facilitation, but let me go back. Can you recommend modifications to this process that would make it useful for tactical planning or for a work unit, rather for department branches or divisions?

Bev: I could. I can't do that right here in this session, but this whole process is adaptable to that kind of thing. And in fact, my staff, we often do these four units and offices and divisions. So, you'll have my contact information in a slide that's coming up at the end. So, please get a hold of me and I'd be happy to work with you on that.

Joan: Okay, we have someone asking do you plan to offer any facilitation classes in the future? I was also asked if HR Mod was going to, and we hope down the line to have a webinar on it, but it isn't scheduled yet. But perhaps you know of some facilitation classes Bev?

Bev: You know Joan, of the top of my head I don't. I'm certainly hoping you guys would offer them. And I'm trying to think, my department, actually Consumer Affairs does offer some training in facilitation. So, again, if you want

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to get a hold of me we could assist there I think. We don't offer formal training, but we can do that.

Joan: Okay, another question, in order to create buy-in and ownership, how might you balance inclusion and participation with not having too large of a group that can slow down the process?

Bev: That's an excellent question. What we try to do when we develop the strategic plan and what I encourage you to do is to shop it around. That is, you know, you have your core planning group. Conduct a SWOT analysis with your employees and then you may want to hold a town hall. We hold regular, employee meetings at Consumer Affairs, and when we have the draft plan we ask for input, and we take that input very seriously. And then we'll incorporate that into the plan as appropriate. So, yes, while you have just a small core group, it's really important to get, I think buy-in throughout the organization on all levels is very critical.

Joan: Okay, this is more of a comment, and it says we have a communication leadership guide that has great tips on facilitation. Let me elaborate a little bit on that. HR Mod has recently released what we Leadership Competency Development Guides. You can find them on the DPA web site, and there's excellent information there on strategic planning, facilitation and other topics. If you go into the DPA web site, click on HR Mod and then it will be one of the top links. If you have any trouble finding it, just send an email to me, Joan Strohauser, and we'll help you find it. Let's see, oh here's one. Can we, in the sense of strategic planners get together to talk about our methodologies our organizations are using? I think someone is wanting to get a focus group or a group together.

Bev: Oh, I think that's a great idea. I would love to be involved if you would like me to be involved. So, get a hold of me if you would like.

Joan: So, great if the person asking this question would email Bev or me we'll send something out. And we have, can we get a copy of the flashcards with the most common values?

Bev: Yes, I can certainly send those to you.

Joan: Okay, just send Bev an email. Okay, I don't see any other questions so, I'll wait just a minute. I don't see anything coming in, so I think that's the end of the questions Bev.

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Bev: Alright, so we're going to wrap up here now. Some resources for you are listed here. Joan mentioned that I'm a member of the Performance Management

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Council and they have a great Best Practices web site there through the Little Hoover Commission. And then of course, the HR Mod, Modernization group here at DPA. Here is a site for them. They have excellent resources, some of which have already been mentioned.

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And finally, some take-away points, the main take-away points from this presentation:

- People are as important to the plan as the process itself.
- Your goals must support your organization's core business functions. I should have put the word core in there. That's really important.
- Those processes that support the core functions should be measured.
- And finally, what gets measured gets improved and gets done. So, that is it for today. Thank you so much. Joan, I don't know if there is time for any more questions, but here is my email address. And if you want to take a look at Consumer Affairs strategic plan there is our web site address as well.

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Joan: Okay Bev, there are no more questions. Thank you for a very thorough covering of strategic planning.

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Just a little bit of follow-up. For all of you, you will be sent an email shortly with some evaluation questions. And in this survey, you will find a link to your certificate of completion. One of things you want to be sure to do is to enter your unique confirmation number in that email in order for it to come to us. And also, we frequently get many, many questions about where can we find the recorded sessions. These will be posted to the virtual training center on the DPA web site, along with a copy of the slides and the handouts. With that, the webinar is now over.

Bev: Thank you so much.

[End of recorded material]